



August 1951

Fifty-One Manuscripts 1451-1951

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq>

Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 3, no.03, August 1951, p.37-44

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby.

Colby Library Quarterly

Series III

August 1951

Number 3

FIFTY-ONE MANUSCRIPTS

1451-1951

THE curator of rare books and manuscripts in the Colby College Library has, since the opening of the Robinson Treasure Room three and a half years ago, had a first-class opportunity to judge the *difference* between rare books and manuscripts, at least as far as public interest in them is concerned. Over and over again, he has watched "the public" pass by, with no more than a passing glance, an exhibition-case in which a rare book worth (say) \$1,500 has been exhibited, and then pause with fascinated interest before a case in which a half-legible manuscript has been displayed to public view. The handwriting of the author has often held visitors fascinated—sometimes by reason of the beauty of his penmanship, but oftener by reason of the complexity of his revisions or the illegibility of his deletions—and in almost every instance when they have been placed on exhibition, manuscripts have proved to be superior drawing-cards.

Because of this fact, the Colby curator decided to give those who attended the 1951 Commencement a chance to see as much of this sort of rarity as the capacity of the exhibition-cases would permit. They were therefore *all* filled with autograph material. No letters were included. Arranged in chronological order, these manuscripts covered a period of five hundred years: 1451 to 1951. The following pages provide a check-list of the fifty-one manuscripts exhibited. *By their hands ye shall know them!*

1. The *Four Gospels*, from the Latin Bible. Finely written about 1451 in German "black letter" on vellum by monks, presumably of the Dominican order, perhaps at Metz,

38 Colby Library Quarterly

Germany, where St. Dominic established a monastic house as early as 1218. A picture of the crucifixion, inserted as a colored frontispiece, was probably done at a later date—1504 has been suggested as such a date by some who have examined this manuscript. The binding is later still. Bound in sixteenth-century brown calf, the book is blind-stamped on the front cover “S. I.” and “O. P.” The first pair of initials undoubtedly stands for “Societas Iesu,” the Jesuit Society founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1539; and “O. P.” probably stands for “Ordo Predicatorum,” the Dominican Order of Preaching Friars. The Jesuit Society was suppressed in 1733, and it was doubtless after this date that this manuscript was removed from Germany. It was presented to the Colby College Library in March, 1942, by Dr. Charles W. Spencer, '90, as a contribution to the Book Arts Collection founded by Dr. Edward F. Stevens, '89.

2. The *Book of Psalms* in Latin: a leaf from an Italian folio manuscript, written on vellum in black ink, with fine “uncial” capital letters in red and blue. This leaf comes from a book written in an Italian convent about 1451, before the art of printing had reached Italy.

3. An Italian *Missal*: four large pages written on vellum by an Italian scribe about 1451. Beautiful, large letters, with ornamental initials in red and blue; musical notation with square notes on a staff of four lines drawn in red: a magnificent specimen of calligraphy.

4. A Flemish *Antiphony* on parchment: a leaf from a choir-book of about 1550, with black lettering and a daintily-done initial letter in four colors. The music has a four-line staff, with the lines drawn in red.

5. A Spanish *Psalter*, dated 1600: a leaf from a beautifully written altar-book, by a Spanish scribe whose Carolingian minuscules and rubricated initial letters make a most legible page, executed on a soft parchment surface.

6. A Spanish *Antiphony*, dated 1600. A leaf with the musical notation in square notes on a staff of five lines, and with archaic indications of tempo; on vellum.

Colby Library Quarterly 39

7. A Persian Manuscript on glazed paper—said to be a leaf from an *Anthology of Poetry*, written A.D. 1625. This leaf has a double-columned central panel, and a marginal panel in which the handwriting appears at various diagonal angles. If we could only read Persian!

8. Austrian Diploma, beautifully written in German and signed by Emperor Joseph II on 16 February 1786 conferring knighthood upon Friedrich Gotthard von Mirbach, a captain in the emperor's private bodyguard. (See pages 185-187 in the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY, April, 1949, for further information.)

9. "Egypt" by Thomas Bailey Aldrich: the author's holograph manuscript of an Italian sonnet, as originally sent to the printer.

10. "Discontent" by Sarah Orne Jewett. This oft-quoted poem was published in *St. Nicholas* for February, 1876. The relation of this manuscript to five other manuscripts of the same poem is discussed on page 6 of *A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett* compiled by Clara Carter Weber (Colby, '21) et al. (Colby College Press, 1949).

11. "Take them and keep them, Silver thorn and flower," by Thomas Bailey Aldrich: six lines in the poet's autograph, sent with a Christmas present in 1881; signed "T. B. Aldrich."

12. "The Eagle Trees: To J. G. W.," by Sarah Orne Jewett. This poem to John Greenleaf Whittier was first published in *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1883. It and Miss Jewett's relation to Whittier were discussed in an article in the *New England Quarterly* for September, 1945 (pp. 401-407).

13. "America" by Samuel Francis Smith. This manuscript of the national hymn, in the autograph of the author, is dated August 12, 1889. For eight years (1834-1842) Smith was professor of modern languages at Colby, then known as Waterville College.

14. "In Dark New England Days," by Sarah Orne

40 Colby Library Quarterly

Jewett. This is the original manuscript of the story published in the *Century Magazine* for October, 1890, and collected in *Strangers and Wayfarers* (Boston, 1890).

15. "America" by Samuel Francis Smith: a second manuscript of the national hymn, this one dated September 17, 1894. Smith wrote "America" in 1832, before coming to Waterville; this manuscript was presented to Colby by Ida Hunneman in 1932, on the one-hundredth anniversary of the hymn.

16. "The Growth of *Lorraine*," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: the author's holograph of the poem first printed in *Captain Craig* in 1902.

17. *Tennyson: A New Estimate*, by Frederic Harrison. A forty-page signed holograph containing a critical examination of the poet—an essay "which, as far as is now known, has remained unpublished" (COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY, January, 1943, page 5). This is still so. In this essay, written in 1902, Harrison calls Tennyson "the supreme Poet of the Victorian era."

18. "Sainte-Nitouche," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: first printed in *Captain Craig*, 1902.

19. "Sarah Orne Jewett," by Annie E. Mower: the manuscript of the introduction published in 1950 by the Colby College Press with Miss Jewett's *Lady Ferry*.

20. "Tasker Norcross," by Edwin Arlington Robinson. This poem was first printed in *The Three Taverns*, 1920.

21. "A Glimpse from the Train," by Thomas Hardy. This ten-line poem is the same as "Faintheart in a Railway Train"—the title used by Hardy when he printed the poem in his volume of *Late Lyrics*. The Colby manuscript is the original holograph sent by the author to the *London Mercury*, in which the poem first appeared.

22. "New England," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: this oft-quoted sonnet first appeared in print in November, 1923.

23. "Haunted House," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: this poem was first printed in the *Century Magazine* for December, 1923.

Colby Library Quarterly 41

24. "Karma," by Edwin Arlington Robinson, first printed in the *New Republic* for December 26, 1923.

25. "Maya," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: it first appeared with "Karma," the manuscript of which is here listed as No. 24.

26. "Thomas Hardy [on] His Eighty-Fifth Birthday," by John Drinkwater. This is the original rough-draft manuscript of the poem printed in the *Sunday Times*, London, May 31, 1925—three days before Hardy's eighty-fifth birthday. The manuscript consists of four sheets; many of the stanzas show multiple revisions and emendations.

27. "First or Last," music by Mary Sheldon: the composer's manuscript, signed and dated 1925, of a musical setting for Hardy's poem by this title.

28. "Rose-Ann," music by Mary Sheldon: the composer's original manuscript, signed and dated 1925, of a musical setting for Hardy's poem "Rose-Ann."

29. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," a two-page essay by Arnold Bennett, dated London, 25 January 1928. Bennett had just re-read Hardy's novel before penning the thousand microscopic words of this review. *Tess* is, declares Bennett, "a simple book. Yes. But the characteristics of the greatest art are simplicity and repose. *Tess* has these characteristics intensely. Great art allays spiritual unrest; it tranquillizes the soul. And this *Tess* does."

30. "Books and Persons," by Arnold Bennett: nearly twelve hundred words in Bennett's microscopic hand. The manuscript is dated "London, 14 October 1928." It begins: "I said it years ago and I say it again: America is a wonderful place. Things occur there that could not occur in Britain; and here is one. Edna St. Vincent Millay is a poet renowned in America . . ." and Bennett then proceeds to discuss *The Buck in the Snow*.

31. *Cavender's House*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The manuscript is dated July 14, 1928. The book was published in 1929.

32. "Thomas Hardy," by Arnold Bennett: a two-page

42 Colby Library Quarterly

essay, in two forms: the original rough-draft in ink, and a "fair copy" in pencil. Both manuscripts are dated "London, 29 June, 1930." The essay begins: "Mrs. Thomas Hardy's biographical writings on her late husband, so truthful, so tactful, so modest, and so well written, have recently done much to draw new attention to the author of *The Dynasts*. . . ."

33. *The Lively Lady*, by Kenneth Roberts: the author's original much-revised holograph, his emended typescript, and his final typescript of the novel published in 1931. The manuscript offers impressive evidence of the labor and care that Mr. Roberts has put into his fiction.

34. "Gideon," by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The manuscript is dated June 20, 1931; the poem was published in *Nicodemus* in 1932.

35. "Toussaint L'Ouverture," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: two manuscripts of the poem first printed in the *Yale Review*, September, 1931.

36. "Sisera," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: two manuscripts of the poem first printed in the *Theatre Arts Monthly*, January, 1932.

37. "Ponce de Leon," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: two manuscripts of the poem first printed in the *Yale Review*, June, 1932.

38. "The March of the Cameron Men," by Edwin Arlington Robinson: the poem was published in *Nicodemus* in 1932.

39. "Wormwood—for thoughts," by Mary Ellen Chase. The essay written on these thirty-eight sheets was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May 1928 and was afterwards collected in *The Golden Asse and Other Essays* (New York, Holt, 1929).

40. *Talifer*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson; published in 1933.

41. *King Jasper*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson; published posthumously in 1935.

42. "Could he but come to me," music by J. G. Ban-

Colby Library Quarterly 43

well: the composer's manuscript, for voice accompanied by harp, for the song in Thomas Hardy's *Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*. A note in the handwriting of the second Mrs. Hardy states that this "music [was] written for the Freckleton Village Players [in] 1936 [for use] in a production of the Play."

43. Christopher le Fleming: "When I set out for Lyonesse": music for the words of Thomas Hardy's poem. The composer's original manuscript, undated but signed by him.

44. "Her Song," by Christopher le Fleming: music (soprano) for the words of Thomas Hardy's poem. The composer's manuscript, undated, but signed by him.

45. *Crystal Moment*, by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. This manuscript, ending with the couplet "Life and death upon one tether / And running beautiful together," is illustrated by a pen-and-ink drawing by the poet and is signed by him.

46. *A Small Town Boy*, by Rufus Jones: the manuscript of this autobiography of the famous Quaker philosopher lacks one chapter.

47. *Time of Peace*, by Ben Ames Williams. The original holograph sheets of the novelist, together with the revised typescript, and the final typescript of the novel published in 1942.

48. "Edwin Arlington Robinson's Poems," by James Norman Hall: the holograph of the poem first printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1944.

49. "D"-Day, by Clare Booth Luce (Litt.D., Colby, '41): the manuscript of Mrs. Luce's brief but moving address from the Senate Radio Gallery on June 6, 1944, a few hours after American armed forces had landed on the coast of France.

50. "When I set out for Lyonesse," music by John Duke: the composer's manuscript for a setting for the poem by Thomas Hardy, 1950.

51. "Thoreau's *Cape Cod*," by Henry Beston: holograph

44 Colby Library Quarterly

of Mr. Beston's introduction for the 1951 edition of Thoreau's famous book on *Cape Cod*.



MUCH ADO ABOUT BROWNING

THE recently published *New Letters of Robert Browning*, edited by DeVane and Knickerbocker (Yale University Press, 1950), contains the text of a letter which Browning wrote from Paris in October, 1855, to his London publisher, Edward Chapman. It has to do with the publication of Browning's *Men and Women*, which Chapman was about to issue in two volumes. At the suggestion of American friends, Browning had previously written to James T. Fields, of Boston, proposing to send him proof sheets of *Men and Women*, as soon as Chapman would have them ready, so that Fields might arrange for a simultaneous American edition. Chapman had just written to tell Browning, in Paris, that Fields was not only ready to accept Browning's offer, but would pay ready money. This was so uncommon an event in Browning's experience that, in writing his letter of October 31, 1855, he referred to "that miraculous Mr. Fields." The result was that Ticknor & Fields of Boston issued *Men and Women* in one volume early in 1856. This was, apparently, Browning's first appearance in America. And now we come to the Colby connection with all these bibliographical details.

Among the eventual purchasers of a copy of Browning's *Men and Women* was a young man named William James. Ticknor & Fields apparently did not sell Browning's poems with any great rapidity, and in 1861 (when William James was nineteen years old) he was able to purchase a copy of the Boston 1856 edition of *Men and Women* to give as a Christmas present "To my young Friend Thomas S. Perry." This young friend was, of course, Thomas